Editor’s Introduction

Voices shares with the broader academic community a sampling of the lectures offered on Juniata’s campus in the previous academic year. This year’s volume has the most contributors ever—thirteen—and represents the first time that the number of articles by Juniata faculty outnumbers those of guest lecturers. It also offers the first contribution by a student. The lectures are diverse in their character, much as should be expected from a liberal arts college.

Despite our best intentions, an inadvertent theme can be found in the table of contents—Challenge. Most of the lecturers challenged students and members of the Juniata community to test their comfort zones, to step beyond the familiar, or to draw upon the past for insight into contemporary crises.

By its basic nature, the collegiate experience tests comfort zones. Students have to learn how to live away from their parents, they have to come to terms with knowledge that undermines their world views, and they have to expose their newly formed opinions
to the scrutiny of faculty evaluations. Faculty too are challenged, as students force us to justify our assertions, clarify our arguments, and come to grips with a rapidly changing world. Jay Hosler, Associate Professor of Biology, opened Convocation by asserting that the Human Torch offered excellent advice for the incoming student—to “Flame On!”—in their quest for intellectual, personal, and social growth. Juniata's resident potter extraordinaire, Jack Troy, closed the year in much the same vein, recounting how chance encounters—and the willingness to step out of comfort zones—can generate life-changing experiences.

Stepping beyond the familiar appears as a theme in several lectures. Manfred Keune, Penn State Professor Emeritus of German, suggests that knowledge of the past, of different cultures, and international travels can serve as foundations for excelling in a rapidly globalizing society. For Keune, these encounters help to liberalize the individual and help to shape them into social beings that are prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Anil Singh-Molares, this year's Will Judy Lecturer, echoes the importance of language study for the 21st century. Singh-Molares argues that translations are shallow reflections of words in their linguistic home, and that complete reliance upon translated words can lead to dangerous misunderstandings.

Drawing insights from the past requires that we first understand how people from earlier times came to grips with their own challenges. The President of Student Government, J. Ahmed Zeerak, reminded his fellow students that they had the responsibility to speak out, to identify injustice in the world, and to help shape the world in which they will live. Zeerak found inspiration in student movements against the Vietnam War, against Apartheid, and against tyranny as proof that speaking out, and not being silent, can lead to substantive change in the human experience. On Constitution Day, Susan Leeson, former justice of
the Oregon Supreme Court, recounted the difficulty in creating the 1787 Constitution of the US. Were it not for the vow of privacy, critical compromises, and a good bit of luck, Leeson suggested that our nation might have divided barely ten years after it had been founded. Finally, Associate Professor of Mathematics John Bukowski shared some of his sabbatical research on Christiaan Huygens. This Dutch mathematician corrected a proof first articulated by Galileo, an example of the wonders and rigors of the scientific mind at work.

*Voices* also contains several outstanding scholarly challenges. José Nieto, Professor Emeritus of Religion, challenges the reader to follow him into the intricacies of Don Quixote's penance in the mountains. What, Nieto asks, is the significance of the “filthy cloth” that drew the attention of inquisitors? Provost Jim Lakso challenges the reader to consider the economic merits of tenure. While the institution of tenure is being questioned as economically limiting, Lakso suggests that tenure is—mostly—of great value to the liberal arts college.

The editors of *Voices* hope that you enjoy these and the other lectures contained in this volume.

David Sowell
Editor-in-Chief